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ABSTRACT

This manual was prepared by the Regional Rehabilitation Exchange (RRX) project to assist rehabilitation and independent living organizations and programs in submitting information to gain recognition as an exemplary program model for transitional services. The manual is intended for programs and organizations in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. RRX transitional services include any short-term training activities and/or related services that promote the transition of persons with disabilities to competitive working life and may be targeted to persons with a wide range of disabilities, such as learning disabilities, mental retardation, mental illness, and/or physical disabilities. Services may be offered through secondary or postsecondary schools or community-based programs and facilities for adult clients. The manual provides information about the background and purposes of the RRX, identifies the scope of the RRX project, lists the prerequisites and criteria for validation, describes the RRX validation process, identifies 10 critical factors (program goals and objectives, target population, documentation and good recordkeeping, success rate, cost effectiveness, comprehensiveness, evaluation criteria, staffing patterns, transportability, and innovativeness) used in determining exemplary programs, provides information on completing the Information Request Form, and identifies implications for validated programs. A completed sample Information Request Form for transitional services is included. (CML)

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ED315569

REGIONAL REHABILITATION EXCHANGE

VALIDATION MANUAL FOR EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES

TRANSITIONAL SERVICES

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CE054030

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HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

Purpose

The Regional Rehabilitation Exchange Project (RRX) has developed this manual for rehabilitation and independent living organizations and programs interested in gaining recognition as an exemplary program model in one of the RRX's designated service categories. These categories, identified by a project advisory council composed of rehabilitation and independent living policy makers, practitioners, and consumers, currently include:

- Job Placement Services,
- Transitional Services,
- Supported Employment Services, and
- Independent Living Services.

Definitions for each of these service categories are provided following this section of the manual.

Examples of organizations and programs eligible for exemplary status include:

- public or private community-based rehabilitation service providers
- independent living centers, independent living service providers, independent living programs
- school-based transitional programs
- vocational training programs

Exemplary status can greatly benefit both your program and other rehabilitation or independent living service providers. For your program, exemplary status can mean broader public awareness of your services, evidence of program effectiveness for continued or increased funding support, and links to other programs like yours. For other programs, it means greater access to models and information about "what works" in the field. The long-term result is expanded and improved services for persons with disabilities.

To be identified as an exemplary program model by the RRX, you must go through a validation process. This manual is designed to help you through the first, most critical, step in the process: completion of an RRX Information Request Form.

Manual Contents

This manual offers information about the:

- background and purposes of the RRX,
- service categories identified as priorities for validation of exemplary program models,
- validation process,
- prerequisites and criteria for validation,
- procedures for completing the Information Request Form, and
- implications for validated programs.

The manual includes a copy of a sample, completed Information Request Form (IRF) that you may use as a guide as you complete your own IRF.

Steps in Completing the IRF

1. **Read through this entire manual** before you begin to complete the IRF, to become familiar with the validation process, the terms used, and the information required.
2. **Look closely at the definitions of service categories** that follow this introductory section. Be sure that your program or activity fits the category you have in mind. You are free to apply for exemplary status in any appropriate category, even if it is different from the category for which you were originally nominated.

   Notice that some service categories - for example, independent living and supported employment - require you to select and complete one or more information subcategories.
3. **Review the Information Request Form** and make a quick list of the kinds of information you will need to properly complete the form. Think about the possible sources you can tap for this information, for example:
   - files, records, and documentation systems,
   - budgets,
   - annual or other reports to funding sources,
   - grant applications, or
   - program staff.
4. **Go through the IRF again,** matching questions with information sources and identifying questions for which ready answers seem not to exist.
5. **Make a plan for obtaining or compiling any missing information** that is needed. For example, many programs do not track program service delivery costs as they apply to a specific client population. You may need to:
   - identify the relevant program costs (be sure to include costs for staff and overhead),
   - identify the number of clients served within a specific category of disability, and
   - calculate per-client costs to provide services within that category.
6. **Call the RRX if you don't understand** how to respond to a question, and/or if you need advice about how to collect missing information. One service the RRX can provide is to assist you in developing documentation systems and procedures that will help you to complete the validation process.
7. **Begin answering the questions contained in the IRF,** even though you may not have all the necessary information at hand. Once you begin, you may discover that you know more than you first thought. Again, if you have questions or problems, feel free to call the RRX.

For More Information

If you have questions or need more information about pursuing the program validation process or gaining recognition as an exemplary program, contact:

Regional Rehabilitation Exchange
Southwest Education Development Laboratory
211 East Seventh Street
Austin, Texas 78701-3281
(512) 476-6861 (Voice/TDD)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSES OF THE RRX PROJECT

The Regional Rehabilitation Exchange (RRX) Project was initiated in March 1983, when it first received funding from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), at that time called the National Institute of Handicapped Research (NIHR). The RRX surveys the rehabilitation and independent living community for programs and practices that demonstrate and can document especially effective service delivery to persons with disabilities and can serve as models for other agencies and organizations. Using a detailed, uniform evaluation procedure that includes peer review, the RRX validates rehabilitation and independent living programs that are especially effective and recognizes them formally as exemplars. These exemplary program models generally demonstrate a high success rate, surpass established performance standards, show significant and stable results, are cost-effective, and include adaptable or transportable components.

One of NIDRR's goals is to promote the widespread use of proven, effective programs and practices among rehabilitation and independent living professionals. To address this goal, the RRX publishes and disseminates an annual *Catalog of Exemplary Programs and Practices* that contains individual summaries describing each program receiving exemplary designation. The *Catalog* is provided to a wide audience of rehabilitation and independent living administrators, practitioners, and consumers interested in learning about the exemplary program models. In some instances, the RRX can broker and provide in-depth technical assistance to agencies or organizations interested in adopting or adapting an exemplary program model.

By identifying exemplary program models, informing the rehabilitation and independent living community about their operations and outcomes, and supporting organizations interested in implementing exemplary program model components, the RRX hopes ultimately to contribute to the continued improvement in services provided to persons with disabilities.

SCOPE OF THE RRX PROJECT

The RRX generally concentrates on identifying exemplary program models from the five states in Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Region VI: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Although the project is confined to providing technical assistance only to agencies and organizations within this region, the project's Peer Review Advisory Council (PRAC) may at times identify exemplary program models from other parts of the country. Out-of-region exemplars are identified to supplement existing in-region models available to offer technical assistance.

The four service area categories, or "core areas", in which programs are reviewed and identified as exemplary, currently include:

- Job Placement Services,
- Transitional Services,
- Supported Employment Services, and
- Independent Living Services.

Definitions of these service categories are provided below.

- **JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES** include any services that result specifically in the placement of persons with disabilities in competitive employment positions. Such services may be targeted to persons with a wide range of disabilities, including learning disabilities, mental retardation, mental illness, and/or physical disability. "Competitive employment positions" refers to employment positions that are available in the community and that could be filled by any qualified applicant, with or without a disability.
- **TRANSITIONAL SERVICES** include any short-term training activities and/or related services that promote the transition of persons with disabilities to competitive working life. Training activities are designed to provide clients with a specific set of skills that can be used to secure and maintain competitive employment positions. "Short-term" refers to a period usually not more than 12-18 months; however, the critical factor is not a specific time period but the fact that, at some point, the client possesses the skills to work competitively and independently, without any ongoing, special services provided after job placement. Transitional Services may be targeted to persons with a wide range of disabilities, including learning disabilities, mental retardation, mental illness, and/or physical disabilities. Such services may be offered through secondary or post-secondary schools or community-based programs and facilities for adult clients.
- **SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES** are designed to enable clients with severe disabilities to secure and maintain employment. Such services generally provide training, placement, and ongoing, long-term support that is necessary for clients to continue employment. These programs, then, do not lead to unassisted competitive employment; they are designed for persons with disabilities so severe that they are not eligible for traditional vocational rehabilitation services. Within this category, exemplary program models may focus on one or more of the following specific elements of supported employment services:
  - innovative, creative funding arrangements,
  - services for specific disability groups, and/or
  - characteristics of effective job coaching.
- **INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES** include a broad range of services designed to improve the quality of life for persons with severe disabilities via organizations and programs that are controlled by the consumers of those services themselves. Such services may include: (1) housing, (2) transportation/mobility, (3) living skills, (4) counseling, (5) community integration, and/or (6) employment-related services. Each of these areas is described below.

  Housing services may include information and referral services; assistance with financial arrangements; provision of accessible housing; skills development focused on home safety, cleaning and maintenance, in-home mobility, and/or food planning and preparation; and any other services necessary for a person with a severe disability to obtain and maintain a desired level of independence in the broad area of housing.

Transportation/mobility services involve the development of personal and community resources to facilitate and increase mobility. Services may range from assistance with vehicle modification or purchase of a modified vehicle, to assistance of appropriate public transportation, to skills development in orientation and mobility.

Living skills services include training and assistance related to daily living needs. Services may include skills development related to communication, personal hygiene and dress, and problem-solving; provision of adaptive equipment or devices; and/or specialized training for personal attendants.

Counseling services may range from peer support services to ongoing individual counseling aimed at development of specific behaviors. Group counseling, personal and social adjustment counseling, sexuality counseling, and/or referral to appropriate professional counseling resources may be provided within this category.

Community integration services may involve a range of activities, including individual/group advocacy, recreation, consumer skills development, and/or training in basic academic skills.

Employment-related services address a variety of issues related to employment of persons with severe disabilities. They may include direct employment services such as job or career development, job placement, or supported employment services; training or support related to job modification, retention, or mobility; and/or community and employer awareness efforts focusing on the benefits of hiring persons with severe disabilities.

PREREQUISITES FOR VALIDATION

Each rehabilitation or independent living program or practice nominated for recognition as exemplary must meet a set of prerequisites. Before further program evaluation can occur, each nominated program must first assure that it:

- has clearly defined program goals, objectives, and activities;
- is performing activities that correspond to one of the current RRX core areas;
- has been in existence for at least two years prior to consideration as exemplary by the RRX Peer Review Advisory Council, and expects to continue operation for at least one year past the time of annual *Catalog* publication (July or August of each year), or has received a waiver from the RRX Peer Review Advisory Council;
- meets necessary state/federal certification or accreditation requirements, where applicable;
- can demonstrate program effectiveness through accumulated documentation of program services and client outcomes;
- has kept records of expenditures for a recent twelve-month period in the categories of personnel, facilities, equipment, and materials;
- is able to provide descriptive program information through the Information Request Form and an onsite visit;

- is willing to share descriptive information with interested rehabilitation or independent living professionals through telephone, letter or site visits;
- will keep records of these contacts and report periodic summaries to the RRX; and
- is willing to act as technical assistance consultant to assist other organizations wishing to adopt or adapt the exemplary program model to their own service delivery systems.

Staff of the nominated program/practice will conduct a self-assessment for compliance with these prerequisites. If all requirements are met, nominated program staff will proceed with the validation process by completing the Information Request Form and returning it to the RRX for analysis.

CRITERIA FOR VALIDATION

Since its inception in March 1983, the RRX has developed, expanded, and refined the validation process by which exemplary rehabilitation and independent living programs are identified. The criteria used for validation have evolved into a system consisting of ten separate critical factors. These factors are related to a weighting system that assigns to each a specific weight relative to its importance in the evaluation process. The RRX Peer Review Advisory Council has adopted these criteria as being those characteristics of critical importance to be considered in the classification of all exemplary programs. Following is a list of these ten critical factors.

1. Program Goals and Objectives*
2. Target Population
3. Documentation
4. Success Rate
5. Cost-Effectiveness
6. Comprehensiveness
7. Evaluation Criteria
8. Staffing Patterns
9. Transportability
10. Innovativeness

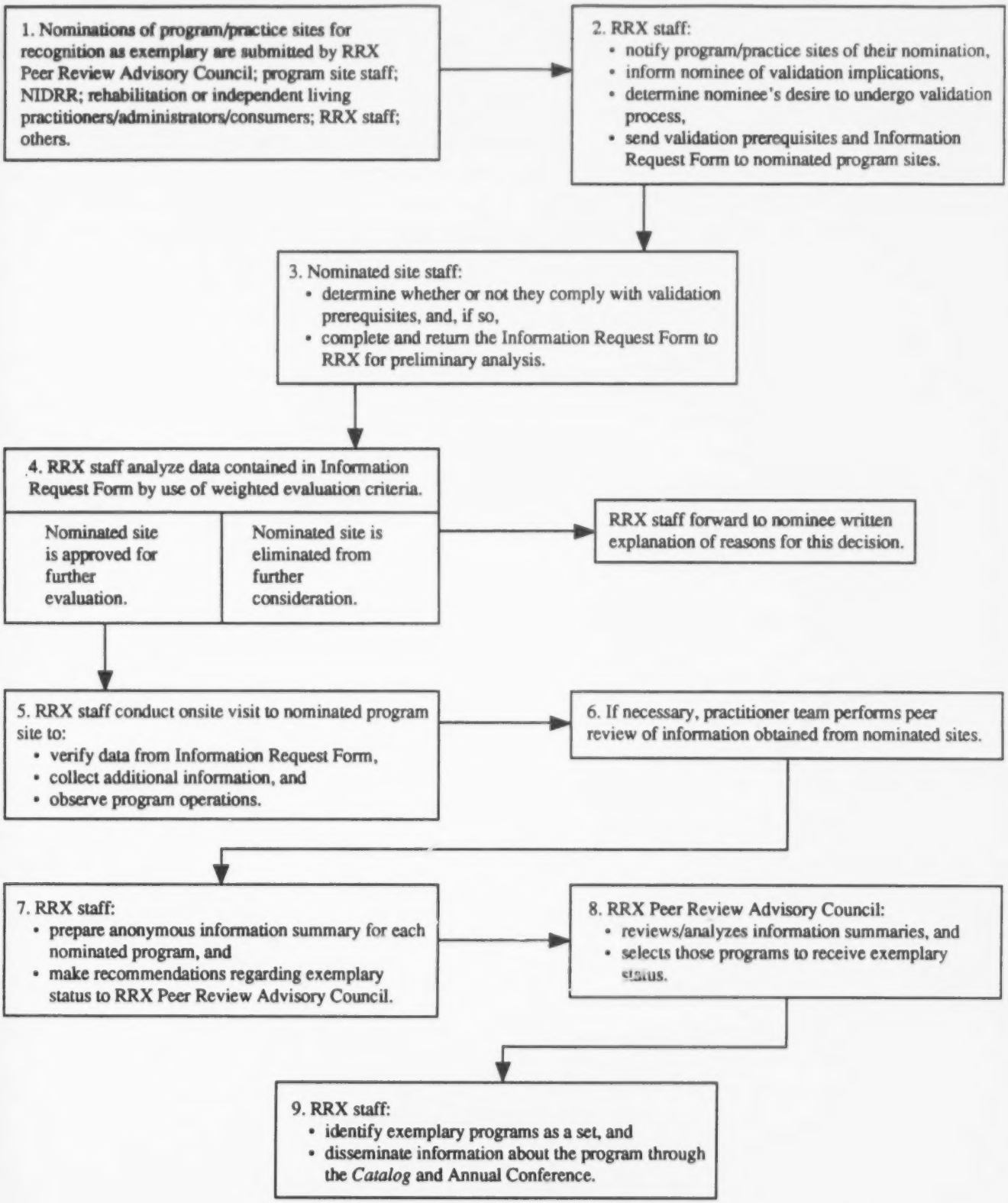
* This factor is the initial point of elimination. Programs not satisfying this criterion will be considered ineligible for exemplary status and will not undergo further consideration in terms of the remaining nine criteria.

THE RRX VALIDATION PROCESS

Validation is a way of identifying those rehabilitation or independent living programs that are exemplary or outstanding in their results. It utilizes an evaluation system that applies a set of criteria to descriptive program information together with an onsite observation to determine whether the documented program effects are truly outstanding.

The schematic on the next page illustrates the sequence of events that constitute the RRX validation process. The process is begun when a potential exemplary program is identified, either by persons within that program or by an outside third party well-acquainted with the program. RRX staff contact

THE RRX VALIDATION PROCESS


1. Nominations of program/practice sites for recognition as exemplary are submitted by RRX Peer Review Advisory Council; program site staff; NIDRR; rehabilitation or independent living practitioners/administrators/consumers; RRX staff; others.
2. RRX staff:
• notify program/practice sites of their nomination,
• inform nominee of validation implications,
• determine nominee's desire to undergo validation process,
• send validation prerequisites and Information Request Form to nominated program sites.
3. Nominated site staff:
• determine whether or not they comply with validation prerequisites, and, if so,
• complete and return the Information Request Form to RRX for preliminary analysis.
4. RRX staff analyze data contained in Information Request Form by use of weighted evaluation criteria.
Nominated site is approved for further evaluation.
Nominated site is eliminated from further consideration.
RRX staff forward to nominee written explanation of reasons for this decision.
5. RRX staff conduct onsite visit to nominated program site to:
• verify data from Information Request Form,
• collect additional information, and
• observe program operations.
6. If necessary, practitioner team performs peer review of information obtained from nominated sites.
7. RRX staff:
• prepare anonymous information summary for each nominated program, and
• make recommendations regarding exemplary status to RRX Peer Review Advisory Council.
8. RRX Peer Review Advisory Council:
• reviews/analyzes information summaries, and
• selects those programs to receive exemplary status.
9. RRX staff:
• identify exemplary programs as a set, and
• disseminate information about the program through the *Catalog* and Annual Conference.

the nominees to determine whether they meet the validation prerequisites and if they desire to undergo the validation process. If so, the nominee completes an Information Request Form and forwards it to RRX staff, who analyze it by applying a weighted information system.

After evaluating a program in regard to the data provided on the completed Information Request Form and according to the critical factors previously described, RRX staff may eliminate a nominated program from further consideration. Reasons for this decision might include:

- failure of the nominated program to correspond with one of the core areas identified by the Peer Review Advisory Council;
- insufficient client outcome data, however defined by the program;
- inadequate descriptions of program operation; or
- incomplete client follow-up data.

If a program nominee is eliminated from further consideration, RRX staff will provide a written notification to program representatives, and no onsite visit is planned. If application of the evaluation weighting criteria indicates that the nominated program should be reviewed further, an onsite visit is scheduled and the remaining steps (5-9) of the RRX validation process are followed.

The RRX has published a Validation Manual for Exemplary Programs and Practices for each program core area. Copies of any of the manuals may be obtained by contacting the Regional Rehabilitation Exchange.

CRITICAL FACTORS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

In reviewing each program, RRX staff analyze specific characteristics to determine the extent to which the nominee provides descriptive information which addresses each critical factor. The information in Figure 1, following, describes the characteristics of each critical factor and indicates where these data are recorded on the Information Request Form. This information is specific only to the core area of Transitional Services.

The RRX Peer Review Advisory Council has not established absolute standards for each critical factor. For example, a program need not address each critical factor to the same extent for it to be deemed exemplary. However, addressing only a few factors extensively to the relative exclusion of most of the others may jeopardize the program's selection as exemplary. During the Peer Review Advisory Council's review, information is compared on all related programs nominated for exemplary status. For this total set, a limited number of programs are selected depending on the relative cross-rankings resulting from the comparison process.

In their selection of exemplary programs, members of the Peer Review Advisory Council bear in mind one of the RRX Project's primary priorities: to develop a pool of technical assistance resources representing a wide range of diverse approaches to rehabilitation and independent living issues. There may be a number of in-region rehabilitation or independent living programs conducting similar activities and producing similar outcomes. It is probable that only one representative of like programs will be recognized, although several may offer worthy programs. For the same reason, out-of-region programs using different approaches and producing different outcomes may be chosen when such an addition to the available technical assistance resources pool would be favorable.

FIGURE 1

CRITICAL FACTOR	CHARACTERISTICS	ITEMS ON INFORMATION REQUEST FORM
1. Program Goals and Objectives	The transitional program provides specialized, short-term temporary services, usually including an intensive training component lasting 12-18 months. As a result of services, clients with disabilities acquire a set of skills that can be used to obtain and maintain competitive employment. For those transitional programs operating in a secondary or post-secondary academic or training institution, a set of supplemental services is also provided to assist the student with a disability to prepare for competitive employment, or advanced education/training.	IF, IG, IH, IIIA, IIIB, IIIC, IIID
2. Target Population	The range and level of disabilities represented by program participants is well documented. The program demonstrates services appropriate to the: • number of clients/students served, and • the types and severity of disabilities they represent.	IC, IE, IIA, IIB, IIC, IID
3. Documentation/Good Record Keeping	The transitional program has complete, up-to-date records on: • client demographics, • client intake, • client assessment/evaluation, • client follow-up, • program costs, and • program outcomes. The transitional program operating in a secondary or post-secondary academic or training institution has complete, up-to-date records documenting that students have a variety of potential transition options, such as: • competitive employment, • advanced academic instruction, or • additional training.	IC, IE, IIA, IIB, IIC, IID, IIE, IIF, IIG, IIH, IVA, IVB, IVC, VB, VC, VIIB

FIGURE 1 (continued)

CRITICAL FACTOR	CHARACTERISTICS	ITEMS ON INFORMATION REQUEST FORM
4. Success Rate	Clients are placed in jobs: • they expect to keep beyond a minimum of 60 days, • related to the education and/or training they received, • at competitive wage rates, • in a variety of occupational categories, and • in which both the employee and employer express satisfaction. Of all the clients receiving services, at least 75% find jobs as described above. The transitional program has a relatively small dropout rate. Students in secondary or post-secondary academic or training institutions may continue their education/training at an advanced level.	IVA, IVB, IVC, VA, VC
5. Cost Effectiveness	The transitional program can provide information to compare program benefits vs. program costs by computation of the following equations: • total annual program budget divided by the total number of clients/ students served per year, and • total annual program budget divided by the total number of clients/ students placed per year. Information is available to determine the extent to which the transitional program has access to and depends upon external resources/assets for its operation.	VIIA, VIIB, VIIC

FIGURE 1 (continued)

CRITICAL FACTOR	CHARACTERISTICS	ITEMS ON INFORMATION REQUEST FORM
6. Comprehen-siveness	Clients/students have access to a full range of services or course offerings as needed, either because the transitional program: • provides these services directly, or • offers organizational access to them. Ancillary support services are easily available to program clients and are closely integrated with the transitional program. For secondary or post-secondary academic or training programs, all services are offered in the mainstream of academic activity; the academic or training programs offered to students with disabilities are relevant and appropriate for direct entry into competitive employment or advanced academics or training.	IA, IB, IC, ID, IE, IF, IIH, IIIC, IIID, IIIE, IIIF, IIIG, IIIH, VIIIA, VIIIB, VIIIC
7. Evaluation Criteria	To plan, develop, report, and refine its activities, the transitional program considers the extent to which it has: • met established program goals, and • addressed local rehabilitation and/or academic training needs. The transitional program also considers the improvement in outcomes as compared to levels existing before the transitional program services were offered. The program can translate evidence of program effectiveness into a rationale for recognition as an exemplary model.	IH, III I, IIIJ, VA, VC, VD, VE
8. Staffing Patterns	Transitional program staff, both collectively and individually, are: • adequate in number to effectively manage and implement the program, • sufficiently well qualified and trained, • able to meet any specialized program implementation needs, and • "common" enough to be found elsewhere should the program be exported to another location.	VIA, VIB, VIC

FIGURE 1 (continued)

CRITICAL FACTOR	CHARACTERISTICS	ITEMS ON INFORMATION REQUEST FORM
9. Transport-ability	Enough evidence exists to warrant the expectation that the transitional program could be implemented elsewhere, with similar resources, and produce similar results. The program either: • is an adaptation of a similar program existing elsewhere, or • has been adopted/adapted by another organization.	VIIC, VIIID, VIIIE
10. Innovative-ness	The program is original in that it: • addresses/solves in a unique way a rehabilitation problem in the area of transition, or • embodies a new idea in the transitional field. The program also offers a unique combination of characteristics related to: • target population, • success rate, • comprehensiveness, and • transportability.	Information is reflected in those items on the IRF relating to these 4 critical factors. During the onsite visit, information may also be collected.

IMPLICATIONS FOR VALIDATED PROGRAMS

Benefits to be identified as an exemplary program are frequently derived from the designation as a model to be emulated by others. It is possible to gain regional, as well as national, recognition as a unique, innovative, and effective program. This recognition earned from the larger rehabilitation or independent living community often enhances the local community opinion of the exemplary program.

To increase awareness of identified exemplary program models and to encourage their adoption or adaptation by other rehabilitation or independent living professionals, the RRX publishes and disseminates the *Catalog of Exemplary Programs and Practices*, which contains detailed descriptions of all programs validated by the RRX Peer Review Advisory Council. Copies of the *Catalog* can be obtained by contacting the RRX.

All rehabilitation and independent living programs or practices awarded exemplary status accept the responsibility to serve as a technical assistance resource to other agencies or organizations interested in implementing similar program components elsewhere. Representatives of exemplary program models should be willing to:

- make a presentation on the exemplary program model at the RRX Annual Conference in the project year in which the model is validated
- upon request, make program presentations at appropriate local, statewide, or regional professional workshops, meetings, or conferences
- share exemplary program model-related information with interested rehabilitation or independent living service providers through telephone contacts, written correspondence, or onsite visits
- maintain periodic communication with RRX staff to report any contacts that appear to have the potential to result in a technical assistance activity
- assist RRX staff and the state RRX Staff Associate in identifying service providers that might be appropriate to receive technical assistance
- act in the role of a consultant to provide technical assistance to other organizations wanting to adopt or adapt the exemplary program model, or one of its components, in their own service delivery systems; all formal technical assistance activities of this nature are scheduled in a manner mutually acceptable to exemplary program staff and staff of the adopting organization and are specified in a detailed Memorandum of Agreement signed by all parties involved, including the RRX
- prepare a report documenting the details of the technical assistance provided and any plans for follow-up with the adopting agency or organization
- provide feedback to RRX staff regarding the appropriateness and perceived effectiveness of technical assistance activity

As indicated in these exemplary program responsibilities, specific methods to encourage continued involvement with the RRX may include making formal presentations at local, statewide, and professional meetings or conferences. Such presentations allow the exemplary program staff to describe more fully to professional colleagues the operations and outcomes of the exemplary program or practice. As an example, all exemplary program models identified in any one project year are showcased at the RRX Annual Conference.

In addition to the conference or workshop attendance, exemplary program staff may be requested to provide limited, more directed technical assistance and training to organizations interested in replicating components of exemplary program models in other locations. For both types of continuing technical assistance involvement with the RRX, a negotiated amount of the expenses for exemplary program staff participation is paid by the RRX.

COMPLETING THE INFORMATION REQUEST FORM

Example The following pages contain an example of a completed Information Request Form.

Application Complete this particular form only if your program provides Transitional Services. **DO NOT** follow this example if your program lies in any core area other than Transitional Services. Separate Validation Manuals are available for programs in other core areas.

Purpose The sample Information Request Form will provide information about possible responses to specific items.

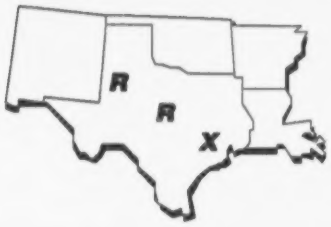
Program Because each nominated program has unique characteristics, answers to Information Request Form items may vary considerably.

Important The example which follows is **NOT** intended to reflected the desired response from any persons completing the form.

Attachments After completing the Information Request Form, attach any additional comments or program-related information you believe will help RRX staff to evaluate your program.

Questions If you have questions or need more information when completing the form, contact the Regional Rehabilitation Exchange, (512) 476-6861 (Voice/TDD).

Regional Rehabilitation Exchange



SOUTHWEST EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY

Transitional Services

INFORMATION REQUEST FORM

Transitional Services include any short-term training activities and/or related services that promote the transition of persons with disabilities to competitive working life. Training activities are designed to provide clients with a specific set of skills that can be used to secure and maintain competitive employment positions. "Short-term" refers to a period usually not more than 12-18 months; however, the critical factor is not a specific time period but the fact that, at some point, the client possesses the skills to work competitively and independently, without any ongoing, special services provided after job placement. Transitional Services may be targeted to persons with a wide range of disabilities, including learning disabilities, mental retardation, mental illness, and/or physical disabilities. Such services may be offered through secondary or post-secondary schools or community-based programs and facilities for adult clients.

For the Identification of Exemplary Programs

QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE LARGER ORGANIZATION

PROGRAM NAME: Services to Students with Disabilities

ORGANIZATION NAME: Oklahoma City Community College

ADDRESS: 375 Lawson Avenue

CITY/STATE: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma ZIP CODE: 73125

CONTACT PERSON: Susan Bennett PHONE (405) 762-8554

TITLE Transitional Coordinator

I. BRIEF ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

A. What services are provided by your organization/facility?

- ☒ PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICES
- ☒ VOCATIONAL EVALUATION
- ☒ JOB PLACEMENT
- ☐ SPEECH AND HEARING
- ☐ INDEPENDENT LIVING
- ☒ VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- ☒ VOCATIONAL COUNSELING
- ☐ REHABILITATION ENGINEERING
- ☐ RESIDENTIAL SERVICES
- ☐ OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING
- ☐ ON-THE-JOB TRAINING
- ☐ OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)
- ☒ Orientation/Mobility Training
- ☐ _____

B. How would you classify your organization/facility?

(CHECK ONE)

- ☐ PRIVATE NON-PROFIT ORG.
- ☐ PRIVATE FOR-PROFIT ORG.
- ☐ STATE AGENCY
- ☐ FEDERAL AGENCY

COMMENTS:

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☒ SCHOOL/TRAINING INSTITUTION
- ☐ SHELTERED WORKSHOP/ACTIVITY CENTER
- ☐ HOSPITAL-BASED REHABILITATION
- ☐ OUTPATIENT MEDICAL REHABILITATION
- ☐ REHABILITATION FACILITY (RESIDENTIAL)
- ☐ REHABILITATION FACILITY (NON-RESID.)
- ☒ COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION
- ☐ PRIVATE PRACTICE PRACTITIONER
- ☐ PROJECT WITH INDUSTRY
- ☐ OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)

_____

C. Does your organization serve persons classified as severely disabled?

☒ YES ☐ NO

If yes, what percentage of the total client population would be classified as having a severe disability?

40%.

How is severity of disability defined?

According to state vocational rehabilitation agency guidelines.

D. What types of certification are currently held by your organization?

Type of Certification	Area	When Obtained	Date of Expiration
Oklahoma Division of Rehab. Services	Transitional Services	1 May 1989	May 1990

If the transitional services program is part of a post-secondary academic institution, please answer questions E. - H.

E. What is the current student enrollment at your institution? 15,342 students

Of this number, how many are students with disabilities? 376 students

F. How many courses of study are offered at your institution? 25 certificate programs, 12 Associate Degree programs, 180 Continuing Education classes, and 15 Adult Basic Education classes.

G. How many campuses are represented by your institution? Three

Are all campuses accessible for use by students with disabilities? Yes

H. What is the institution's philosophy (including program goals) related to students with disabilities?

The Community College is guided by the philosophy that all students, including students with disabilities, should have full access to all the institutions's educational opportunities. The goals of the Services to Students with Disabilities Program at Oklahoma City Community College are:

1. Assist students with disabilities to identify reasonable and appropriate educational and employment objectives.
2. Offer to students with disabilities those support services, including accommodations, that may be necessary for them to realize their identified educational and employment objectives.
3. Provide assistance to students in making the transition from school to work.
4. Follow up employment placements and assist in the job maintenance effort.

II. CLIENT DESCRIPTION

(NOTE: The term "client" is used to describe transitional services program participants. If the organization providing the transitional services is a school or other training institution, the term "students" may be preferable to "clients.")

A. How many clients are presently receiving services in the transitional services program?

250

B. Clients in the program:

- range in age from 18 to 52 years;
- have an average age of 22 years;
- have achieved an average educational level of 12th grade; and
- range in educational levels from 10th. grade to some college grade.

C. List the major categories of disability groups (and the respective number of clients in each) for those clients currently in the transitional services program. Please be specific when describing the disability group, e.g., mental retardation (mild-moderate versus severe-profound) or mental illness versus long-term mental illness.

DISABILITY GROUP CATEGORIES	NUMBER
Mental retardation (mild-moderate)	28
Hearing impairment/deafness	32
Visual impairment	29
Orthopedic impairment	60
Learning disability	70
Mental illness	31

D. What number of program clients would be classified according to each of the following living arrangements?

	NUMBER
independent living	168
supported/supervised living	39
institutionalized	-
live with family	43
other:	

E. What are the sources of referrals made to the transitional services program?

State vocational rehabilitation agency; developmental disabilities agency; state and local offices of mental health authority; self.

On average, how many referrals to the program are made by each of these referral sources, on an annual basis?

State VR - 165 Mental Health - 55

DD - 90 Self - 30

F. What types of client evaluation information are available to you when clients enter the program?

Admissions tests; medical/psychological profiles; work history; academic history.

How is it used? For use with students in setting educational and vocational objectives, for course placement purposes, and for planning and providing whatever special services may be needed for individual students.

G. What additional evaluation information, if any, is collected once clients are admitted into the transitional services program? For post-secondary transitional programs, please describe any in-house career/vocational assessment services available to students.

Placement tests may be administered to students to determine any need for remediation in particular subject areas. Other assessment techniques may include aptitude testing, interest inventories, and situational assessments.

H. Do program clients receive supportive services from outside agencies? Yes.

If so, what types of services are provided, and from what source(s)?

Assistive devices or specific accommodations may be provided by the state vocational rehabilitation agency for students who are VR clients. The local mental health office may also provide regular counseling sessions and medication for some students.

III. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. When was the transitional services program begun?

September 1984

B. Provide a brief history of the transitional services program from its beginnings to the present time. (Attach an additional page, if necessary.)

See attachment.

C. How does the transitional services program fit into the overall organizational structure? (Please attach an organizational chart, if available.)

Refer to the attached organizational description of the Community College

D. Through what sequence of steps would a "typical" client progress from the point of program entry through program exit? Include any general organizational services that may precede or follow transitional services. (You may wish to use a flow chart to illustrate the sequence of steps in this process.)

1. referral
2. intake
3. assessment/evaluation
4. setting of objectives
5. specialized services delivery
6. job search assistance
7. job placement
8. post-placement support
9. follow-up

E. Describe the full range of in-house support services available for use by transitional services program clients.

1. assessment; aptitude testing and interest inventories
2. vocational evaluation, include situational assessments
3. counseling
4. job club
5. remedial instruction/tutoring
6. reader/interpreter services
7. special accommodations and/or adaptive devices
8. transportation assistance, if necessary

F. What specific activities are undertaken to: (use an additional page, if necessary)

1. monitor client progress in the transitional services program?

Students are encouraged to check in with program staff at least bi-weekly, on average. Grade reports are shared with program staff to assist in academic progress monitoring and to suggest when assistance may be needed. Quarterly debriefings are held to assess progress in individually set academic and vocational objectives.

2. teach clients work-related, but not necessarily job-specific, skills (e.g., grooming, personal/social adjustment, money management, transportation)?

When these skills are found to be lacking, students may be asked to attend specially designed instructional classes, or they may be referred to outside agencies for this instruction, e.g., the local independent living center.

3. match clients with appropriate employment positions?

Information obtained from interest inventories, other assessment/evaluation techniques, academic skills testings, and academic/vocational objectives is used to identify appropriate possibilities for job placement. In addition, job club activities are helpful in the process of "putting together" students and jobs. Jobs are developed and/or modified as necessary.

4. assess client and employer satisfaction with the job placement?

After placements are made, students and employers are followed up quarterly for one year to assess satisfaction with the placement. In addition to this formal contact, students and employers are encouraged to call a program staff member whenever a difficulty presents itself.

5. help clients retain their jobs?

Program staff indicate that they are available if a problem arises after job placement. Usually, discussions with the student and the employer are sufficient to address the problem to the satisfaction of both parties. In other situations, more in-depth intervention may be indicated: counseling, help in other areas (e.g., transportation), or placement in a different job.

G. Is there a "core" set of services delivered to every client, or does service delivery vary according to each client's needs and abilities?

The set of services identified in D., above, is usually offered, and provided, to most students. However, there may be variation when individual students' needs/wants/preferences would suggest it would be appropriate.

H. Does the transitional services program attempt to identify future job needs?

Yes. Information is obtained from state and local offices of the employment service, as well as from representatives of local business and industry. Recruiters are often valuable sources of job information as well.

If so, how is this information used to modify program activities?

When appropriate, program content and structure are modified to fit job skill needs indicated by employers, both current and projected.

I. How is the effectiveness of the transitional services program measured?

By meeting student-identified academic and vocational objectives, by the number of job placements, and by the satisfaction of students and employers with these placements.

J. Given the response to III.I, why do you feel that the transitional services program is outstanding or exemplary?

We have been successful in helping students attain their educational objectives and obtain/maintain employment positions with which they are satisfied.

IV. PROGRAM OUTCOMES

A. Describe the employment placements that have resulted from the transitional services program that have been documented across a recent 12-month period. For each disability group, indicate the numbers of clients entering the transitional services program and the numbers of clients placed in competitive employment positions. A placement is defined as employment for 60 days or more. Competitive employment refers to community-based job placements, pay for which meets or exceeds the minimum wage.

In reporting disability group categories, consider the person's primary disability as determined by medical or psychological information. If more than two disabilities are present, please list in the multiple disabilities category. **DO NOT** include a client in more than one disability category.

The client data contained in the following table describe the 12-month period from September 1, 1988 through August 31, 1989.

Disability Category	No. Clients Entering Program	Number of Clients Placed in Competitive Employment
TOTAL	332	229
Mild-moderate mental retardation	35	28
Severe-profound mental retardation	-	-
Hearing impairment	31	20
Deafness	12	5
Visual impairment	48	37
Blindness	-	-
Deaf-Blind	-	-
Mental illness	40	24
Long-term mental illness	-	-
Amputation	-	-
Orthopedic impairment	72	48
Spinal cord injury	-	-
Head injury	-	-
Organic brain syndrome	-	-
Cardiovascular disorder	-	-
Alcohol/drug addiction/abuse	-	-
Learning disorder	94	67
Speech disorder	-	-
Multiple disabilities	-	-
Other (specify)	-	-

B. For the same 12-month period specified in IV.A, please provide data for the following occupational categories into which COMPETITIVE employment placements were made and maintained for 60 days after placement. (NOTE: The total number of clients placed into competitive employment positions should equal the TOTAL number specified as competitively employed in IV.A.)

Occupational Category	No. Clients Placed	Hourly Wage Range (Low-High)
Professional, Technical, Managerial	47	$5.00 - 17.50
Service	64	3.50 - 5.10
Clerical & Sales	47	4.00 - 9.18
Processing	12	4.25 - 7.80
Machine Trades	37	5.00 - 6.50
Bench Work	10	3.50 - 7.00
Structural Work	12	6.50 - 12.00
Miscellaneous (specify)		

C. For those clients NOT placed in competitive employment positions, please provide information for the following categories, for the same 12-month period specified in IV.A.

Category	No. of Clients
Clients completing the program who failed to find employment	20
Clients completing the program who entered an educational/training program	16
Clients completing the program who entered an on-the-job training program	28
Clients NOT completing the program	18

V. FOLLOW UP INFORMATION

A. Describe the follow up services provided by the transitional services program staff.

Students and employers are contacted every 3 months on a formal basis. Informal contact may be more frequent, e.g., by telephone or surprise visit to the place of employment. For those students who are VR clients, counselors are questioned regarding satisfaction with services and placements.

B. By checking the appropriate cells in the table below, indicate at what intervals following job placement the follow-up information is collected, and from what sources.

Source	Intervals of Time Following Job Placement						
	30 days	60 days	90 days	6 mos.	9 mos.	1 yr.	1 yr.+
VR Counselors			✔	✔		✔	
Clients	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	
Client Families							
Employers			✔	✔	✔	✔	
Other (specify)							

C. What types of information is generally gathered in follow-up contacts?

Information is obtained regarding satisfaction with the program services and the placements which have been made. In addition, any problems that may have come up are discussed, an action plan for resolving the problem is designed, and additional feedback is requested if the problem persists or new ones arise.

D. In your judgment, what are the characteristics that commonly describe clients making a relatively smooth transition to employment?

1. individual determination
2. motivation to work hard to achieve goals
3. ability to cope with stress and anxiety
4. willingness to consider a wide range of vocational possibilities
5. openness and acceptance of disability
6. adaptability in new or unfamiliar situations
7. stable health

E. What are the characteristics of clients who fail to make a transition to employment?

1. inability to achieve academic objectives
2. poor or unstable health
3. inability to exercise discipline and self-control
4. relocation to another area
5. difficulty in focusing on realistic vocational objectives
6. financial problems

VI. PROGRAM STAFF

A. The following staff are involved in providing transitional program services:

Job Title	No. Staff	% Time	Primary Job Roles
Transitional Coordinator	1	100	Administration; management; fund-raising; counseling
Diagnostician/ Evaluator	1	100	Testing; counseling; devel. indiv. student objectives
Instructor	4	100	Teaching remedial classes
Instructional Aides	12	50	Assisting in instruction; tutoring; interpreting; note-taking; reading; recording
Counselor	1	100	Counseling; testing
Job Developer	2	100	Job Club; community liaison; developing jobs
Job Placement Specialist	3	100	Job placement; follow-up

B. What characteristics, if any, have been found to describe transitional services program staff who are thought to be especially effective?

Open-mindedness and flexibility regarding placement possibilities. Willingness to modify and/or restructure jobs for particular students' abilities/needs.

C. What specific activities/materials/curriculum are used for training transitional services program staff members?

Instructors and Instructional Aides complete a two-week training course in remedial techniques. Job Placement Specialists complete a program orientation generally lasting 4 days.

Are these activities/materials documented and available for use by other agencies or organizations?

Yes

VII. PROGRAM COSTS/INCOME

A. Does the organization have an established fee-for-service schedule for transitional program services?

Yes, for students who are VR clients.

If available, please attach a copy.

See attachment.

B. Costs associated with providing the current level of transitional program services ON AN ANNUAL BASIS are as follows:

Category of Cost	Dollar Amount
Personnel	$384,500
Facilities/Space	-in kind-
Equipment	7,000
Materials	10,500
Transportation	2,000
Other:	
TOTAL	$404,000

C. In your judgment, what kinds of costs might be associated with "start-up" of a similar transitional services program in another organization or agency? These "start-up" costs would not be expected to continue past the first year. Please estimate the anticipated level of expense across broad cost categories.

Personnel	$125,000
Equipment	5,000
Materials	15,000
Transportation	1,500
TOTAL	$146,500

VIII. INVOLVEMENT

A. Does the organization utilize a community-based Advisory Board or Board of Directors to provide input and guidance to the transitional services program?

Yes - we have a Business Advisory Committee.

B. Does the transitional services program disseminate brochures or other public information concerning its operations and outcomes?

Yes.

If so, please attach a copy of these publications.

See attachments.

C. What types of cooperative agreements exist between the transitional services program and :

1. educational institutions - The program has agreed to provide assistance to several community colleges in the area of central Oklahoma that would like to begin similar post-secondary transition programs on their campuses.

2. business & industry - We use members of the Business Advisory Council to help in student placements, interviews, feedback regarding appropriateness of program services, and forecasting of future local job needs.

3. community groups/organizations - The Program Coordinator and Job Developer regularly make presentations to local service organizations and to the greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce.

4. vocational rehabilitation agency -

We have ongoing referral agreements with the state VR agency, the state developmental disabilities agency, and the state and local offices of the mental health authority.

5. other - The vocational departments of several area high schools have recently suggested that a formal agreement be drawn up to specify responsibility for transitional services delivery to secondary students with disabilities who express a desire to pursue post-secondary academic training.

D. Has the transitional services program provided training or other assistance to any other organization or agency interested in implementing the program?

No, but as noted in the response to the previous question, the program has agreed to serve as a resource to other community colleges wishing to begin a similar program.

If so, what is the organization, and where is it located?

E. Is there any reason to assume that the transitional services program might not be transportable to another organization and produce similar results as have been documented in your agency?

No.

If so, please explain.

COMMENTS OR OTHER PROGRAM-RELATED INFORMATION YOU WOULD CARE TO PROVIDE:

ALL THE INFORMATION INCLUDED ABOVE IS ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

Signature	Title	Date
Susan Bennett	Transitional Coordinator	November 10, 1989

RETURN TO: **Regional Rehabilitation Exchange**
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 East Seventh Street
Austin, TX 78701
(512) 476-6861 Ext. 230 (Voice) Ext. 304 (TDD)